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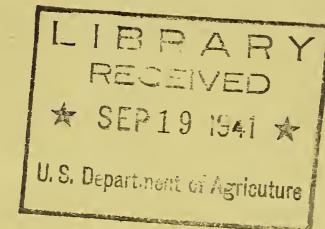
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Agricultural Marketing Service

Washington, D. C.



LABELING OF MERCURY COMPOUNDS
AS DISINFECTANTS AND GERMICIDES
UNDER THE INSECTICIDE ACT

An examination of the labeling of mercury preparations recommended as antiseptics and disinfectants has revealed serious misbranding.

Mercury bichloride and certain other mercury compounds are effective at high dilution against *Eberthella typhosa* (*B. typhosus*), but, as usually recommended, fail to kill the common pus-forming organism *Staphylococcus aureus*. Actually a solution of mercury bichloride as strong as 1 percent does not kill this organism in 5 minutes at room temperature. Mercury preparations inhibit the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus* in very high dilution and in the usual methods of testing this inhibition has been incorrectly interpreted as killing. This has been discussed by Shippen (American Journal of Public Health, Vol. 18, page 1231, 1928) and by Ruehle and Brewer (U. S. Department of Agriculture Circular No. 198, pages 7-8, 1931).

This property of mercury compounds must be taken into consideration when they are recommended for use in such preparations as germicidal soaps, disinfectants for surgical instruments, and similar products. For such uses they must be capable of actually killing *Staphylococcus aureus* at the dilution and in the period of time for which they are intended to be employed.

C. C. McDonnell,
In Charge, Insecticide Division

June 8, 1934.
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